

9
LABOR, AND ITS ALLIES.

A

THANKSGIVING DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED NOVEMBER 18, 1858.

BY

T. H. ROBINSON,

COLLEAGUE PASTOR OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

OF

HARRISBURG, PA.

THEO. F. SCHEFFER, PRINTER, HARRISBURG.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

HARRISBURG, November 23, 1858.

Rev. T. H. Robinson :

DEAR SIR:—We would respectfully ask your consent to the publication of the sermon preached by you on Thanksgiving Day. We make the request because the desire has been very generally expressed, in which we most cordially concur; and because we believe that the statements and arguments of the discourse, so forcibly and eloquently presented, will do good.

Yours truly,

JOHN J. PEARSON,
RUD. F. KELKER,
G. H. SMALL,
D. FLEENING,
J. W. WEIR,

J. WALLACE,
JOHN H. BRIGGS,
E. L. ORTH,
WM. M. KERR.

HARRISBURG, November 24, 1858.

To Hon. John J. Pearson, Rud. F. Kelker, and others :

GENTLEMEN:—I have received the kind note in which you request for publication the Thanksgiving discourse lately delivered. It is with a reluctance which you will appreciate, and which is increased by the fragmentary character of the discourse itself, that I place the manuscript at your service, hoping that the good you anticipate in giving it to the public may be secured.

Very respectfully, yours, &c.,

T. H. ROBINSON.



DISCOURSE.

“Is not this the Carpenter, the son of Mary.”

MARK, VI. 3.

My theme to-day is Labor, and its allies.

My apology for selecting so peculiar a topic for a day of public thanksgiving and praise, is a brief one. As I look upon the society which immediately environs me in this capital of our Commonwealth; as I extend my vision to the surrounding districts, and thence abroad upon our great and magnificent State, upon our farming population, upon our lumber and mining districts, upon our villages and towns and cities, I find that the largest class, by far, of our fellow-citizens are laborers; are that class who, by the wear and toil of muscle, are supporting themselves and their families, as well as upholding communities and the state. They are to be seen everywhere—on our farms, in our forests, in our coal mines, in our manufactories, in our workshops, filling the various spheres that the mechanic arts have opened to men. What would our thanksgiving be, if over our state Labor should refuse to join in it? It would be little more than a discordant psalm from the professions, the politicians, and the paupers.

I am, then, to speak of Labor. I shall try to unfold its dignity; the allies with which it should be united; the honor that should be accorded to it; the responsibilities that rest upon it to render praise to God; and the obligations we are all under to join in its psalm.

I have no new theories to propose about labor and capital; about the relation between the producers and the consumers of community, or that between the rich and the poor. I have no rhapsodies to utter and no poetry to sing concerning the independence and nobleness of Labor, clad in its homespun and its short frock—stiff, hard-handed, brown-faced, stoop-shouldered Labor. I enter on no crusade to level the classes of society, though I may say that the profession in which I am permitted to minister displays both its power and its dignity in casting down imaginations and every high thought, and in bringing the high

and the low to sue for salvation on common terms and at a common mercy seat. There are no steps around the throne of grace, where any man may kneel above his brother.

By Labor, in my discourse, I refer to physical, bodily toil. There is the toil of the mind which the professional man endures; and no laborers may be more severely taxed than he. The world's workers are by no means all of them men of mere physical toil. It is, however, an admitted truth that, in the acquisition of our great primary wants, Labor—physical labor—is the grand agent. And it must ever be so. The mass of men in every age have been laborers, and in the ages to come the majority of our fellow-men must devote themselves to bodily toil. Man is ever obtaining new aids to Labor. The inventions are ever adding to the number of labor-saving instruments. We have long had the brute forces. There is no necessity for harnessing man to the plow or the dray. We have steam power. We employ the forces of Nature—the waters, the winds, the chemical agencies, and electricity. We have almost a superabundance of machines; yet the prime agent, after all, is human muscle. It is needed everywhere. Whittier, in one of his briefer prose articles, unveils an age which he calls the millennium of machinery. We might seem to be rapidly approaching it. It has been calculated that the thirty thousand planing mills in the United States perform work which would require one million eight hundred thousand hands. But what would all this power of machinery accomplish without the hundred thousand human workers who control it? Great Britain, with a laboring population of only four millions of men, is, by the aid of the mechanical powers, doing daily the work of six hundred millions of men. But what would all this six hundred million power of machinery do without the four million human workers? Nor has the presence of this vast accumulation of power filled that little island with idlers. The time will not soon come when men may all enter the professions, and leave Labor to machinery.

The law of Labor is the primal law of the human economy. Our first father was set to work in those days when work and worship were one. And after sin brought its curse upon the earth, the law was written again by the finger of God in the sweat of man's brow. But it was no Cain-mark there. It was no frightful sear on "the human face divine." It was not the curse of Cain, that he should toil and sweat; but rather that he should be an idler and a vagabond, stung out of the hive of earth's first workers. If Labor be a curse, it is because sin has enfeebled the worker, and made Labor a mean and hard drudgery

for him. The Devil evidently is no friend to labor, for he spirited away Job's oxen and flocks, and sent him to a pile of ashes to scrape his boils at leisure. Labor is one of the best defences against the assaults of the Tempter. He can hardly make a workshop out of an honest, hearty laborer; but a loungeer need hold out no sign-board. Labor is the glory of man. It makes him a producer—I had almost said a creator; thus giving a proof that he is the image of God. It is the spice of man's food; the balm of sleep; a good companion for the conscience; the handmaid of piety. It is widely and closely related to all human interests.

If any enterprise is begun among men, Labor must stand godfather at the christening. Genius may be there; Invention may be there; Power may be there; Labor must be there. Do you ask what Labor does? Does it anything higher than dig and eat bread? It gives bread to everything else. It builds and endows colleges and universities; it sustains the gospel, and sends its angels flying over the earth; it executes the most gigantic schemes of internal improvement; it multiplies the cunning of the inventor a thousand fold; it spreads the snowy canvas of commerce on every sea and river; and with the quiet unostentation of one who is but minding his own business and doing his proper work, it puts its broad Atlantean shoulders under the huge pillars of government. States and empires rest securely on them; yea, the whole race. And whenever it meets its reward, it bows uncomplainingly to its great burdens; but when Power has sought to tread upon it as on a slave, it has rocked kingdoms to their foundations.

There are two of the grandest sights eyes ever looked upon unfolded to us on each new day: the "sun walking through the heavens in the glory of his majesty, and Labor walking over the earth." Nor dare we say which of the two is the more magnificent. They have a joint mission to bless mankind. Together do they rise from the repose of the night, and hand to hand they work to the plan of God. We see them in the waving meadows, and in the golden fields of grain. We see them both on the hill-slopes, amid clambering vines or smiling on the ripening fruit. We see them both in the broad valleys, laughing over the magnificent harvests. We penetrate the primeval forests, and there stands Labor lifting his axe amid the crashing trees, while the sun glances his light among the leaves, whispering approval and blessing. We see Labor spanning the rivers with his massive and beautiful arches of masonry. We look out upon the seas, and lo! Labor is there speeding his way, flinging aside the waves for a path to the world's

commerce, while the sun fills the canvas with favoring breezes. Labor is worth more than all the fabled gods of the ancients. He stands among the oaks of many centuries, and startles the old conservatives of the forest with his voice. "Let there be cities and villages and smiling farms; let thousands of homes and worshiping temples appear;" and they appear. He says to the mountains, "Be removed;" "Ye valleys rise;" and it is so. The results of human labor challenge the admiration of the world. Go stand in one of our great American cities; let your eyes survey the monuments of human industry—the massive edifices of marble, stone or brick, that for miles line the streets. Thence go and stand upon the docks of one of our seaports; behold the mammoth warehouses groaning beneath their burdens; gaze around you upon the interminable piles of wheat, corn, pork, beef, iron, coal, lead, sugar, cotton, tea, coffee; the bales, the casks, the barrels, the boxes; behold and hear the clashing and crowding of hundreds of drays, carts and trucks, mingled with the tumultuous swelling of thousands of voices; look out upon the forests of masts and pipes, the lading and unlading vessels, giant steamers, tugs, flat and canal boats. Or come into one of our splendid farming districts; ascend Flat-rock, on this Kittatinny range of mountains, near us, and look down upon Cumberland valley in the time of harvest; behold its villages, its farms, its fields of grain, full of workers, and bethink you there are a thousand such scenes in our land. Then, overpowered and wearied though you be, think if you can of the twenty-five thousand miles of railway stretching over the States, all crowded with the swiftly passing trains, transporting the fruits of Labor. And finally, turn and fix your eye upon some specimen of the genus Man; scan him, mark well his proportions, take his measurement; a biped, about six feet only in height, his weight one hundred and forty pounds, having a pair of legs and but two hands; greatly inferior to the horse in strength; yet he has accomplished all this by the use of muscle and the play of arms.

Yet how has Labor fared in the world's opinions? How has it been received in the market of the world? It has been a poor "Mordecai, sitting at the king's gate." "The royal apparel which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head," have all been claimed by wicked Hamans—the world's idlers. We shall do our part toward hanging them up on gallows "fifty cubits high."

The history of the world tells us that Labor has always been

compelled to struggle in order to defend itself from oppressors — Labor has suffered from Power. Power has arrayed on its side wealth, nobility, learning, and sometimes religion, and sought to make Labor a slave. Governments, whose great end should be to secure to Labor the unmolested enjoyment of its fruits, and to maintain its rights, have often been the first harpies to fall upon and devour them. They have taxed Labor, and put upon its huge shoulders unjust and oppressive burdens. Labor ever pays most cheerfully its penny to Cæsar. Tribute to whom tribute is due. But millions are exacted from Labor for purposes which are entirely foreign from the just ends of Government. Labor must pay the triple salaries of bloated party office holders; must defray millions of unnecessary expense; must support monied monopolies; must pay the glory bills of nefarious wars which offend every Christian conscience. Labor is a blind Polyphemus; a helpless giant set to work by princes and rulers. His brawny limbs may be covered with gold, but it is wrought into chains and clasps; and as the giant toils he may amuse himself with the tinkling of his symbols of bondage. The only title of Government to tribute from Labor is that it protects it; and when it fails to do this, when it devours, when it burdens Labor, it has forfeited its right to tribute, and deserves to be rocked by the heavings of the people. The laborer is worthy of his hire. Jehovah has thought it important enough to tell us so himself. He would throw a divine shield around the honest worker, and claim for him his wages against the world; and that, too, whether he works by the year, the day, or the job. Whatever the hand of honest toil earns in the eye of justice—mark it, in *the eye of justice*, not the scanty pittance that may be doled out to it—must be paid, or there will be a reckoning before the Throne of Thrones. “Behold, the hire of laborers which have reaped down your fields, and which is kept back of you by fraud, *crieth*; and the cries of them which have reaped, have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.”

Labor, too, has been often crowded into corners; hemmed in and compelled to work on stunted patches of God's great domain; to toil in foul shops and garrets; crushing and smothering itself amid dust and wheels, in order to give princely range over broad acres to the wealthy and baronial classes. In the Old World, men, women and children have been huddled into miserable huts under the hillside or on the edge of swamps, that the fields which God had intended for his own children might be given up to the deer and the partridge, and the sports of the nobility. The historian of the French revolution enu

merates, among the causes of that terrible outbreak of passion, blood and death, the oppressive bearing of the game laws upon the peasantry. "Game of the most destructive kind, such as wild boars and herds of deer, were allowed to go at large through spacious districts, without any enclosure to protect the crops of the peasantry. The poor man, under severe penalties, was forbidden to defend himself. Hoeing and weeding were prohibited, lest young partridges should be disturbed. Hay must not be mowed, lest the eggs should be destroyed. The stubble of the fields must be left, that birds might find a shelter." And all this, that the non-working classes might enjoy the sports of the chase. It was of far more importance that a baron should have a shot at a partridge than that a peasant and his family should be kept from starving. The cry of Labor has shaken the thrones of the Old World, because immense parks of primeval forest have for ages been allowed to shelter hares and deer and partridge, while they frowned defiance and death on famishing men and women.

Labor has also, been under the ban of prejudice as ignoble, mean and low. It has been orthodox to look upon it as inconsistent with cultivation and refinement, and as inseparable from vulgarity. Long ago Cicero said that "nothing noble could be found in a work shop." Cicero was a sprig from the self-complacent aristocracy of his Roman age. The sentiment did not die with him as it should have done. It has been nourished wherever nobility runs only in blood and titles. It has been fed with the pap of royalty. It has found a welcome under the branches of every aristocracy in the Old World, and been echoed by all the servile imitators of our own land.

Society has immense power in fixing the moral and social standing of the members that compose it. Let a ban be set upon any class of our fellow men; let any profession be pronounced by the public voice disreputable; let any order of men be thrust down, on account of their occupation, below the general level, and they will soon become degraded, and will assume that character which society has attributed to them. It is almost impossible for any man to live above, or to rise above the moral and social standing to which society has consigned his class. A hangman cannot resist the weight of public censure that bears him down. His office in itself, since he is an administrator of justice is just as honorable as that of the judge who consigns criminals to his hands. He vindicates the majesty and defends the purity of Law. If men are to be executed, it is as necessary to the public welfare to have hangmen as to have judges. But society is blind and unreasonable in its pre-

judices; and where they are aroused, woe to the hapless class that comes under them. Society has been pleased to consider Labor as unfashionable and undignified.

Now, Labor can thrive while governments suck hogsheads of blood from its full veins by unrighteous imposts. But when it is consigned to herd with the brute; when it is associated in public estimation with ignorance, with stupidity, with boorish, uneultivated manners, with that mere animalism whose highest ambition is to eat and drink and sleep; when the laborer is regarded as but a two-legged ox, whose greatest value is a brawny frame; when our homes of refinement talk with horror and disgust of the disorderly conduct of the lower and laboring classes; when the "higher classes"—the people of "standing"—look with reprobation at hard palms, at homespun garbs, and unfashionable exteriors, Labor will wither under it, and continue to be low-born. Why has there been such a tendency throughout the land to abandon the ranks of Labor and enter what are called the professions? What has introduced these infatuated customs, whose decree dooms parents to toil and wear out their lives that they may leave fortunes for their children, and thus place them above the necessity of work? Why are the sons of our staid old farmers breaking one after another from their homes, and rushing to the cities and towns to seek sudden fortunes? What has induced the general impression that it is a great waste of power for an educated man to devote himself to agriculture or the mechanic arts? It is because children see some positions more respectable than those their fathers fill; they become ashamed of their ancestry; they would lift the family into distinction. Many a man would probably be ashamed to confess that his father was a small farmer, a shoemaker, or a village blacksmith; but when God, in order to save the families that have been raised above labor from extinction, sends them back again every third or fourth generation to the plow, the awl or the anvil, it is evident He regards Labor as a blessing and an honor.

And what has been the result of this unreasoning state of things? Our towns have been filled with idlers. The professions have become overstocked. It has multiplied the class of loungers, hangers on at county court-houses, party politicians and petty office seekers. It has filled the resorts of profligate idleness, and multiplied sots; taking them from the families both of the rich and the poor. It has brought precocious felons, unbearded youths into our State prisons; given a premium to laziness; pampered the spirit of caste; and drawn into the

vortex of speculation, idleness and crime, perpetual conscriptions of youth, who might, by labor and honesty, have been worthy members of society. Why is it that dainty and scented dandyism, twirling a dainty cane in dainty fingers, walks the streets and steps into the parlor as if it had an inalienable claim to social respectability; while Labor plods along, abject, uncheerful, "with a lowly stoop, as if it were begging pardon for being in the world;" or wearing a proud and sullen look of independence, as much as to say, "I shall strike back if I am touched?" And why, also, has Labor been content to be low, and sought to be lower still, by drowning in the dram-shop and beer saloon all remaining sense of manliness, and squandering both the hours of its rest and the fruits of its toil on the harpies who devour it?

But is there anything in Labor, or in its necessary accompaniments, to forbid its standing on as high a platform of respectability as anything else? Has not God assigned it a place as the great business of human life? Must not the majority ever be laborers; and has the Creator doomed the majority to occupy a position that is not honorable? If we were to enumerate the various classes of men, and divide them into two bodies, putting in the first the professional men, the teachers, painters, sculptors, the scientific men, the capitalists; and in the other, the agriculturists, the mechanics, all who pursue those avocations which demand physical labor; the last would probably preponderate over the first a thousand to one. Is the position of this great majority less honorable than that of the minority in fact? It may be considered so; but is there anything in it to make it undignified? He is honorable who fills well the place God has assigned him. The hand that pushes a plane or smites an anvil is engaged in as honorable work as the hand that holds a pen or wields a sword; and incomparably more honorable than the fingers that handle only canes and cigars. When Prince Albert was to lay a corner-stone, a golden trowel was put into the princely hand. It was an indignity offered to Labor in the eyes of a whole kingdom. He should have used a common one. The standards by which we estimate one's claims to social standing are as absurd as they are ridiculous. What was his father? Of what family is he? What is his occupation? Does he belong to the nobility? Has he wealth?

It is respectable to travel. If one has made the tour of Europe, and passed three months reading Murray's Hand-Books, paying pennies to the lazarroni of Italy, and looking at nobility, he is respectable. It is a sign of wealth and leisure to travel. But what dif-

ference whether a man goes one hundred or three thousand miles ; whether he goes in a stage coach, on horseback, or on foot ? To roll along in one's own carriage, the highly blooded horses champing the bit, has been dignified by the name of "travelling with one's own establishment." It is more respectable than some other modes of locomotion. But after all, the "establishment is only vulgar horse flesh ;" and how can that be more honorable than to employ the more costly and noble human muscle, and, with a hickory stick and heavy-heeled boots, go on foot ?

Civilization, intelligence, refinement, are honorable ; but they all are built on work. Workers, "Farmers," said New England's great statesman, "are the founders of civilization. Without the cultivation of the earth, man is in all countries a savage. Until he gives up the chase, and fixes himself in some place, and seeks a living from the earth, he is a roving barbarian." It is not wise, in the superstructure of a building, to despise the foundation. If workers are the *sills* of society, it is neither wise nor noble in those who rest upon them to treat them with any contempt.

It is, then, a question of no mean importance, how shall Labor be elevated and redeemed from the wicked and unreasonable prejudices which exist against it ? Whenever we step out into the struggling world around us, we meet this question in some of its forms. It is exciting attention and discussion. The various forms of Fourierism have risen to work out practically an answer ; and if they have all sadly failed, it has been in part because they sought to dress up toil in holiday garments, and thus win lovers for it. They have thought to make Labor attractive by putting gloves on his hard hands, wiping the sweat from his brow, and making a community of workmen. They would break up the family, take away from the toiler his wife and sweet babes, and make work pleasant by making a common family out of several hundreds. They have called Labor by a better name—Industry ; a better sounding name, you observe, but it is the same old thing still. A plow is no more easily held because the plow-tails are gaudily painted. Will varnishing a hoe-handle, putting an ivory handle to the blacksmith's hammer, or calling a mortar-hod by some new name, make work any more noble or easy ?

There are, however, three allies with which, if labor be united, it cannot fail to be honorable. Its company will elevate it. These allies are Learning, Liberty and Religion. Let us look briefly at each.

I. Learning and Labor. It is not long since, in the history of the world when Learning was a rare attainment, and the difficulties of obtaining it were very great. Educated men were objects of distinction, and were treated with peculiar favor. A simple fact will illustrate this.

In books of English law we read of criminals convicted with or without the "benefit of clergy." This benefit was an exemption from certain kinds and degrees of punishment such as were prescribed to lay offenders; and the benefit was extended to all who could read and write. In the early times nearly all who had even the rudiments of education were clergymen. An ability to read was a legal sign of the sacred office. Hence, clergy, scholars and clerks were convertible terms in the old English style; and clerk is still the law term for a preacher of the gospel. Since the educated men, i. e. the men who could read and write were so few, it was necessary to be sparing of them. When a man, therefore, was convicted of felony or manslaughter, he was put to read in a Latin book of the old Gothic characters, and if the Ordinary of Newgate said "*legit ut clericus*," i. e. he reads like a clerk, he was only burned in the hand and set free; otherwise he suffered death for his crime.

The day has long passed when the mere circumstance of having an education will save a man from merited punishment. The rare attainment of a few centuries ago is now the common school boy's heritage. A liberal education is within the reach of every young man of energy, however poor he may be. Learning, in its true nature, is democratic. It belongs to the masses. It is a birth-right of every man. It is as good for the laborer as the man of business. But it has been placed in an unnatural antagonism to Labor. It has been used as a means by which men might elevate themselves above the rank of laborers. Multitudes have pressed into the halls of science, have obtained there a modicum of learning, and then rushed into the professions as the only sphere for usefulness, distinction and greatness. Power, respectability, influence were all there. Any man will do for a farmer or a mechanic!

Now, every man who attempts to live by his learning should remember that he is a tax on the laborers, the producers of community. He must eat, and wear what the labor of other men has produced. He produces nothing himself. If he has any good to confer upon the world, for which the world might well afford to pay him, he is an honest

man. If by his learning he gives the world something it needs; if he adds to the well-being, the happiness of mankind; if by his genius, by invention or discovery, he gives new forces or new energy to any of the productive forces of man, then the world ought to pay him for it. The world might well afford to board and clothe Whitney a thousand years in return for his cotton-gin. If a man by his education increases the comforts or diminishes the ills of life; if he reveals ennobling truths, extirpates any of the curses of society, then he is worthy of wages; the world can afford to give him food and raiment. Give him a stall in the world's market. Let him cry his goods.—They are worth buying and paying for in silver and gold. But no man has any right to eat the bread and wear the clothing for which other men toil, without paying a full equivalent. The world should suffer no loss by any man. Every man should confer on the world some substantial good. Men often talk of society as if it owed them a living. This is often the argument of the highway robber and the petty thief. The world owes nothing where it has received nothing. Men should ask themselves what good they have ever done the world that makes them creditors. He is himself already a debtor to the world who has rendered it no real, unquestionable benefit. If there are more men in the professions within the limits of a certain district than the legitimate work of the professions demands; if there are fifty preachers, lawyers, doctors, etc., where twenty would answer, and do community the same good, then it follows, (does it not?) that thirty might be spared, and are in fact a burden on community. They live on their fellow men, and are not paying for their board. If they were in the poor house they would be no more certainly paupers than they are now.

Every man who gets his bread and clothing in community ought to sharply question himself, whether he can pay all, or part, or none of his bills. It is a question of interest to the community. The young men who are rushing away from hard labor, lured by the idea of dignity, honor and ease in the professions, should strictly examine themselves whether they have any fair and honest prospect of paying their way,—of giving as well as receiving. Are the various professional men of community, of the state, paying back to the world some substantial good for the food, the raiment and the honor conferred upon them? If not, they are paupers. Are the editors and authors, who furnish the world's reading, really giving to the toiling producers of mankind, that which is worth the clothing and bread they get? If

not, they are paupers and dishonest. I might ask similar questions of every profession and of every occupation. Every man, whether he lives by a profession, by office, by politics, or in that more dubious way, by his wits, is bound in all honesty to render to the laborers, who feed, clothe and honor him, some substantial good. If he does not, let him for decency's sake relieve the world in some way of the burden of supporting him. Let him seize an honest hoe, or saw, or hammer, and maintain both himself and his self-respect.

It is indeed, very natural for those who thus live upon others, to suppose that they are the benefactors of the people. We must forgive this much to every professional man. It would be strange to find one among them all who would admit that he was not needed, and that he did not pay society fully for his support. And if a clearance were to be made in any of the professions, leaving only so many as were needed for legitimate work, it would be difficult to say who should retire; who of the clergy should counsel their feeble congregations to give up denominational prejudices and fall into some other body; or who of the lawyers, the old or the young; who of the physicians, the regulars, the homœopathists or the eclectics; yet it might admit in many cases of very little doubt that if the thing were done, men's souls might be as well cared for; men would have enough of law and courts; the world would get along very well with the remaining doctors; and find there was plenty of medicine still; while the bills of mortality would not greatly increase.

We look for the elevation of the race, not a part of it, not the non-laborers only, but the whole of it; the laborers too. In the changes of fortune many of us are in the professions. Our fathers, or our grandfathers were probably farmers or mechanics, hard workingmen; and probably our grandchildren will many of them be the same. Labor must rise in dignity with the race as it rises. And that it may, learning should be diffused so widely that no classes may claim a monopoly of it, and none feel themselves to be debarred from its attainment.—Let all the means of popular and thorough education be multiplied till the common man shall stand in substantial attainment, and mental discipline where the scholars of the age now stand. Let that immense mass of human muscle, of physical power, that now goes triumphing over the lands, be regulated in every single man, and applied by comprehensive thought; let the mind that now slumbers in the millions of mere workers be awakened, and we shall be able to set no bounds to the triumphs of art. Let the wheel of fortune turn, and

laziness, that now sits on high, gaped at by a thousand admirers, and honored under the respectable name of Leisure, go down, and Labor, brown-faced, honest, smiling, jocund Labor, come up to rule the day; let the educated men come out of the crowded professions, and quietly take their place amid the world's workingmen; let them no longer keep aloof from the tug of life to sit in idle offices, to enjoy leisure, to watch the chances for bread; and then Labor will become intelligent, manly and full of self-respect. Labor has well been compared to a giant Samson—blind; often led as by a child; sometimes unwittingly to the pillars on which it bows itself, only to bury both itself and its foes together. Learning will give eyes to this Samson. His enemies will no longer bind and mock him, and work him as an ox in their mill. Let such honor and respect be paid to Labor as will incite the laborer to cultivate his intellect, and the hands that cultivate farms and work in shops, will become fit to hold the sceptres of States. Titled ignorance will fall below educated Labor. The true *peers of the realm* will be men of honest worth; the Hugh Millers of the coming age, and the nations of the earth will doff their hats to them. In that millennium of educated Labor, political demagogues will grow lean from starvation; for men will cease to regard any such class of men as indispensable to the salvation of the country. Laziness will meet its doom. Its symbols will be tokens of shame. It will be no waste of power for an educated man to pursue the productive arts. Mankind, generally, will become the apostles of work, and join in proclaiming: "He that will not work neither let him eat."

II. Liberty is another ally with which Labor must be united. Labor has been herded too long, in the world's opinions, with ignorance, with stupidity, with brutality and filth; and to complete the degradation, has been wedded to slavery. Liberty, on the other hand, has been associated with wealth, with idleness, with gentility, with offices, with leisure. Liberty is a noble thing. It is too sacred, too high-born to associate with low-born Labor. But what is *Liberty*? What do men mean by this to which they sing their peans of praise? Liberty! It is to escape the toils, the burdens and drudgeries of life. It is to be idle; to live at ease; to join in the amusements, the displays, the frivolities of life. Wearing epaulettes, brandishing swords, acting the gentleman, managing state politics, and being of no use to any body; this is respectable, genteel, glorious—this is liberty. *But is it?*

Liberty we conceive to be the privilege of freely seeking the highest

interests of both soul and body. The great mission of Liberty in the earth is to secure to every man independence of his own mind and body; the privilege of seeking their true and highest development.

True Labor, too, is not simple physical force. Man is called the prince of working animals, not because of his physical power—both the horse and the ox have more than he—but because, behind the physical power of man, there is the electric energy of a will. It is this which gives to the human laborer his superiority; this gives him quickness of movement, aptness, readiness, god-like execution. If, then, you paralyze the will of man, you palsy the arm of Labor. When man works entirely at the will of another, he is but a machine; he is worse, for he is clumsy, awkward and stubborn. But when the God-inserted main-spring, the will, is free; when it is a man's own; when it works not from without, but from within—not for another, but for itself, then you have a man, the highest style of laborer, a being to make and to manage machines. Labor must be free to use its own powers for itself. Let Liberty be dissociated from it, and it is at once branded and doomed. A stinging curse lights upon it. It becomes a drudge, a scullion, a soulless thing. Without a free will for a soul, this Titan, this giant son of earth, is but a giant corpse. Liberty will inspire the heart and nerve the arm of Labor. When, therefore, we call on the Labor of our Commonwealth to offer thanksgiving to-day, we would remind it that one of its chiefest blessings is Liberty. Labor here is free. Its children are not slaves to any earthly master. It works for itself. Labor must be free from unjust and unnecessary taxation; must be defended against the encroachments of capital, and against the sentiment that regards the gilded dishonor and fraud of a capitalist or a government officer as hardly less ignominious than the working dress of a laborer. Let Labor be enfranchised; let it be delivered from the prejudices that environ it; let Learning and Liberty both woo it, and it will enter upon a grand mission. Dandies and loungers would be driven from decent society to herd together in their own place. The fireside of the mechanic would become refined by intelligence. We should no longer see young men idle in the streets because they were ashamed to be artisans; nor would there long continue to be such a rush of talent and enterprise into the professions, into trade and speculation, into the army and navy. Labor would lift up its head in the street, and “be praised at the entering in of the gates.” The avenues of virtuous and enlightened social intercourse would be thrown open, and the vast army of laborers would enter them. Rational entertainments would

banish the dissipation into which Labor is now led. Happy and intelligent firesides would each night refresh the weary worker, and send him again to his toils with a brave heart.

III. Labor has a third and noble ally to aid in elevating and dignifying the laborer. That ally is Religion. Labor and Religion! Holy and beautiful alliance! The sunburnt and rugged eldest son of earth, and the comely and chaste daughter of heaven. Let us publish the bans!

But there is an objection to this marriage! Religion and work are thought to be incompatible. "How can two walk together unless they be agreed?" To take Religion into the counting-room, the manufactory, the workshop, the field, the mine; to bring Piety in her heavenly robes in contact with coarse work, cankering toils and cares; to wed her to the hum of machinery, the whirl of spindles, the clank of the anvil, the confused noises of saw and file and chisel, of plane and lathe and mallet; to entomb her amid the darkness, the smut, the drudgery of mines; to surround her with the roar of furnaces and the rumbling of engines! A most unsuitable match! As soon wed a backwoodsman of the forests to the Princess Royal of the British Isles!

The work of common life, so full of hardships and struggles, and often of penury, is supposed to be inimical to Religion. But secular and hard work will always be a prime necessity in the earth. And they who look forward to a millennium when Labor will be abolished; when all the world may leave the scenes of familiar toil, and devote themselves to ceaseless prayers and praises; a day when the tools of the mechanic will lie neglected in the shop; when the hammers of the manufactory will cease their din; when the ships of commerce shall furl their sails and lie rotting in our docks; when rust and decay shall consume our railroads, and the song of harvesters cease in the fields; look for a day unpromised of God; a millennium of curses. The millennium of Labor will come when work and worship go hand in hand over the earth; when he who unfurls the sails will do it to the glory of God; when the sound of the hammer shall keep time with the songs of the sanctuary.

Religion is the friend of Labor. Christianity loves the working man. No more glowing theme could I bring before you than to show you how Christianity has ever deported herself towards earth's laborers. I would show you how God, when He would select the spiritual teachers of the race, selected not a school of philosophers, but a nation of practical

working men; not scholars and sages of Greece, but the farmers and herdsmen of Palestine; Moses and David from the sheepfold; Elisha from the plow. Especially would I point you to the great founder of Christianity, and I would ask you if He was born in the hidden abode of some philosopher; if he spent his boyhood amid parchments and teachers; if he passed his youth at famous seats of learning; or his riper years at the head of an academy, as did Plato? Did he spend those thirty years of his private life as a recluse, shut up in profound study and meditation? Nay! I point you to his humble home, the home of a craftsman. Start not back, ye delicate despisers of honest labor, who think that human fingers were only made to be kept unsoiled. It is even so; the Lord of Glory was a carpenter. Behold in that unpretending shop of Joseph, the founder of Christianity, the Saviour of men, the Son of God; a man of toil, earning his bread, eating the rewards of his own labor, for many years an unknown meechanic. Those hands, which with a touch unstopped the ears of the deaf, and opened the eyes of the blind; which were raised to call down blessings on the thronging multitudes; which were at last nailed to the cross for the world's sin, those hands had for years handled the saw and chisel. He has taught us that true greatness and dignity reside in character, not in a man's employment. His example sheds rays of divinest beauty upon the most obscure workers on Earth. He as truly evinced the real grandeur of his person and character while quietly working as a mechanic, as when, surrounded by entranced thousands, shouting Hallelujahs, he rode triumphant into Jerusalem. Angels, doubtless, gathered around that humble shop, and gazed with worshipful admiration at him who toiled amid the rough artisans of Nazareth, veiling his Godhead in that human form. The path of duty is the path of greatness, let it lead us where it will. True, heroic grandeur is to do whatsoever God gives to do devoutly.

“ Let foplings sneer, let fools deride,
We heed no idle scorner;
Free hands and hearts are still your guide,
And duty done, your honor.”

I would point you also to him, who perhaps of all mere men stands nearest the Divine Founder, as the exemplar and expositor of Christianity; the Apostle Paul. And who was he? A retired philosopher, a monk, a religious recluse? Was he a man of leisure or of wealth? He was an intelligent mechanic. His great apostleship was not at all endangered by close contact with his trade. Behold him entering the

great and luxurious city of Corinth, where all labor was consigned to slaves, proclaiming both to the philosophers and common people, the sublime doctrines of Christianity, and then turning aside to the humble labors of a tent maker. Paul the most distinguished character in the annals of Christianity, surrounded by the implements of toil; the coarse hair cloth, the needle, the twine; Paul leaving his high arguments on the Godhead and the resurrection, to toil at his trade and pursue his unfinished task by an evening lamp; meanwhile meditating on the high themes of the Gospel. Those hands that were stretched forth in eloquent appeal to Governors and Emperors; those hands that by their impassioned gestures moved senators and philosophers, as he discoursed on Mars Hill; those hands that penned the noblest and most important writings of the world—those hands showed in their hard and toil worn lines that Christianity is not a foe to labor; but has a decided sympathy for the honest and manly independence of toil. It is a noticeable fact that when God would bring grand actors, men who mould human affairs, upon the stage, He often calls them from obscurest positions. When He would reveal a new world to the astonished nations of Europe and give to science, enterprise, commerce, the arts, and religion new life, He selected as the master of the day the son of a wool-comber, Christopher Columbus. When he would light up the darkness of Papal night by newly kindled fires of truth and piety, he puts the torch into the hand of a poor monk, Martin Luther, the son of an obscure miner.

I might show you, too, what a magnificent workshop God has fitted up for man in the world which he inhabits. The forces of nature wait to be wooed and won. The vegetable kingdom unlocks her stores to the key of Labor. The animal kingdom bows its neck to the yoke man puts upon it. The earth "laughs with her harvests when tickled by the hoes" and harrows of the laborer. The world is a great workshop; stocked with fuel, with forces, with mechanical powers, with a thousand conveniences for intelligent, contriving mechanical workers. A sovereign voice in nature invites and summons man to Labor.—When he refuses to hear the call, the sallow, yellow look of dyspepsia tells him that the curse of Nature and of Nature's God rests on his laziness.

Religion would elevate the homes of Labor. It would throw honor around every honest calling. It demands that a man be treated according to his moral worth, and the degree of his intelligence and cultivation; thrusting into their proper insignificance the distinctions which mere wealth, office, family connections, dress, and foppish man-

ners would create. It is of little account whether a man weaves cloth or sells it; whether he shapes the glowing iron in a sooty shop or sells it in a wholesale hardware-store; whether he makes shoes or sermons; whether he repairs shattered garments or shattered constitutions, tinkers at brass and copper, or at the laws of a Commonwealth—if he be virtuous, orderly, industrious and faithful. Religion cultivates those virtues that make every home of the laborer a comfortable and happy retreat. It transforms a profane and godless man, a slatternly workman, an idle lounge, into an humble and devout worshipper; an example of order, industry and contentment. It mingles songs of joy with the commonest employment, and throws around the daily toil of the christian a sacredness, by linking it with the progress and successes of a Divine Kingdom.

How then shall Labor be elevated? Let it be united to its allies Proclaim the bans. Publish this evangelical alliance. Learning and Labor! Liberty and Labor! Religion and Labor! Thus enlightened enfranchised and christianized, Labor would give to the world new proofs and prodigies of its gigantic power. Science, civilization, social progress, and the Divine Kingdom in the earth would all be quickened under the new electricity. Give Labor its due. Hand the dusky giant, who stands impatient in his low and glowing smithy, the promised sword and spear of battle. He will lay them on his anvil and with a right good heart and a strong arm, he will beat them into plow shares and pruning hooks. And

“As his massive hammer thunders down,
Shaping the stubborn irons to the plan
Of God, each stroke adds lustre to his crown,
While yon wide span
Of gazing planets shout—Behold a man!”

Labor will then raise such a host as has never yet taken up the shout of battle; will wage such a war as has never yet illuminated the page of history; a war of conquest against the quarries of marble, of stone of coal and of iron; a war of exterminating ancient forests; of leveling mountains and vallies; of subjugating all soils and waters steam and lightning, and the forces of nature. Through pathless wilds, around the sides of mountains, by the river courses, over chasms and gorges, spanning mighty rivers, across seas, will Labor lead its victorious army. Suffering will be mitigated; new source of comfort opened: happy and christian homes be multiplied; the peace and unity of the human family be promoted, and that gl

ous "Second Coming" heralded, which shall be in the clouds of Heaven, with great power and glory, and with thousands of angels.

Men will yet be proud to put on the homely garb of Labor, and live and die with those whose destiny it is *to work*. The day speeds on when the dust of the anvil will be as honorable as the ink of the scribe; when father and son shall cheer each other as they bend together in their toil; when the shop of the workmen shall be as full of sacred things as the study of the scholar; for "Holiness to the Lord shall be written on the bells of the horses." In that day; Learning will endorse Labor! Literature will illustrate Labor! Art will emblazon it! Poetry will enshrine it! Piety and philanthropy will magnify it! A bronzed laborer working quietly for man, for truth and for God; leaving his usefulness and importance to be measured by Him who apportions to us all our work, shall be esteemed

"A glorious Man! and his renown shall be
Borne by the winds and waters through all time,
While there's a keel to carve it on the sea,
From clime to clime,
Or God ordains that Idleness is Crime!"

Let Labor then join in praise and thanksgiving to God to-day. Let His protecting care over it; His benignant smile upon it; the honor He has accorded it; let the present rewards, and promises of future good to the faithful worker, draw from Labor a grateful psalm; let a shout of praise ascend from all; let the din of machinery be hushed to hear it and help it onward; let the workshop take up the chorus; let the plowman speak it to the sower, and the sower prolong it to the reaper, and the reaper mingle it with the shout of Harvest-Homc. "Yea, let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord!"

